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ABSTRACT

The educational system of the 60's and early 70's is not adequate to solve present problems, correct failures of traditional education, or meet new challenges. This monograph offers directions toward better education to meet future needs of the nation. Educational problems such as unequal opportunities, undefined goals, inadequately prepared teachers, and confidence gaps exist. Although the primary responsibility for educational improvement rests with the citizens of each state, the state education agency has a major leadership role, in cooperation with local school systems, other educational institutions and organizations, other state agencies, the legislature, the governor, and federal education agencies. The state education agency can help establish goals and policies, needed changes, determine priorities, and assist with implementation, evaluation, and accountability. The listed directions in which most state education agencies are moving are new and desirable. Citizens and their public officials need to join with educators at all levels to make fundamental improvements essential to meet the rapidly changing needs of society. A related document is ED 047 409. (SJM)

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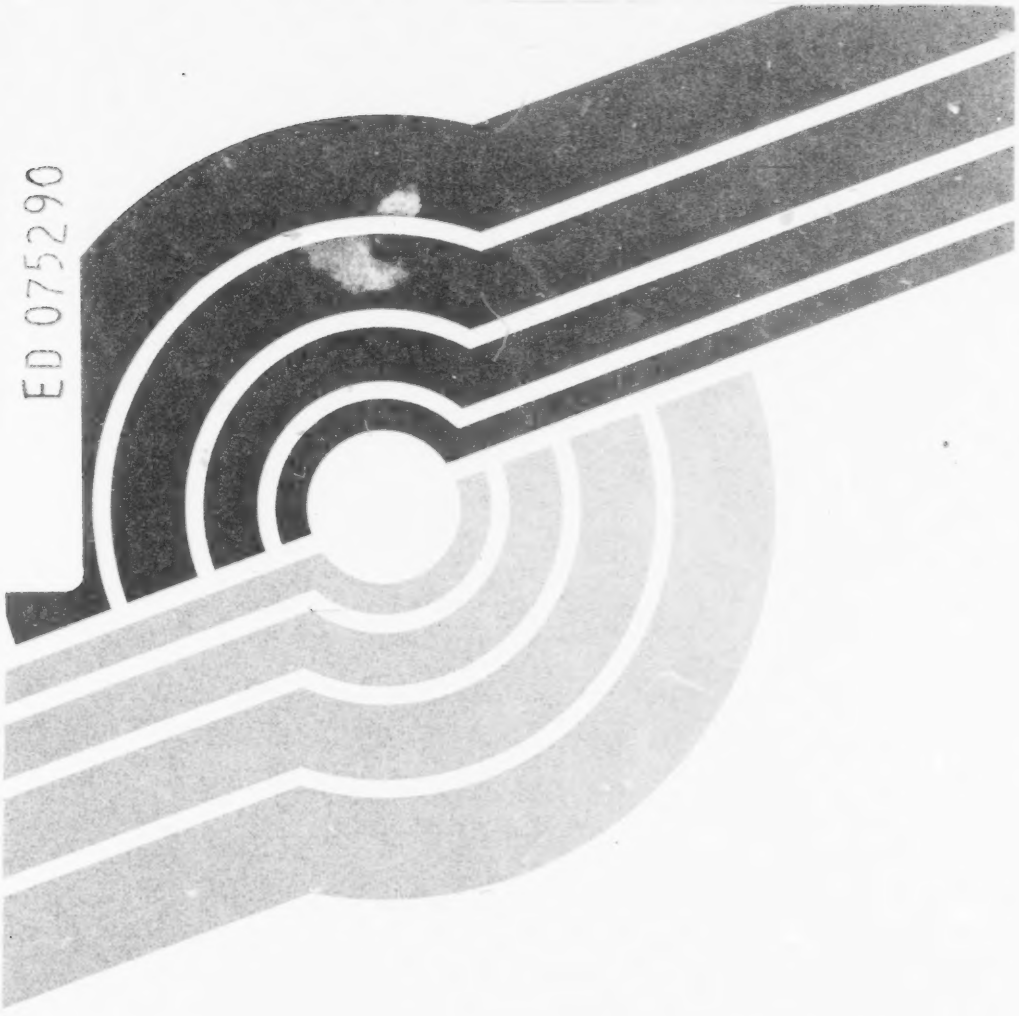

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directions to better education

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IMPROVING STATE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

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DIRECTIONS TO BETTER EDUCATION

Suggestions for Improving Education in a Changing Society

Prepared by
CLIFFORD L. DOCHTERMAN
and
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with the cooperation of the project staff

Based on the Publication
Emerging State Responsibilities for Education

IMPROVING STATE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION
Denver, Colorado
1970

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BASIC PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION

The Sixties saw many changes in the United States and the world: in technological fields, in concern about the environment, and in human relationships and requirements. There will be more in the Seventies and Eighties. Education, too, made numerous advances in the last decade. But it lagged in important respects and must be drastically modified and improved if it is to meet the constantly changing and expanding needs of the nation. Since society and education are interdependent, they can only go forward together.

What are some of the problems and failures of traditional education?

- Many school systems do not challenge the potential or meet the needs of their students. And few have faced up to the special needs of many students, including the underprivileged, the poor and the racial minorities (as seen by themselves and others). Results: frustrations and dissatisfactions on the part of the public, teachers and students; dropouts, demonstrations, strikes and disruptions; and losses to society of human potential, time and money.

- Educational opportunities at all levels are often fragmentary or limited. Note examples at opposite ends of the spectrum: limited provisions for early childhood and kindergarten education, inadequate post-secondary and adult education and often limited opportunities for career preparation.

- Vague and poorly defined goals, poor planning and inept leadership as represented by an educational establishment that is too often old, tired or simply self-serving; lack of coordination and cooperation among the various educational levels; school systems that are too small or too large to be properly organized for effective or economical operation.

- Teachers who have been inadequately prepared in the new technologies and new methodologies; curricula that are too inflexible and have little or no relationship to the changing needs of a dynamic society.

- Failures on the part of the public and state legislators to understand or support an educational system that must innovate, improve and expand if it is to carry out its mission.

- A dangerous and widening gap between what we say we believe about educational opportunities and the opportunities we actually provide for many students.

These are some of the problems. There are others. Some states and some school systems have made significant progress; many others have not. And where the problems have not been met, they are increasing month by month and year by year under such relentless pressures as the population explosion, racial and other minority unrest, population shifts, changing occupational patterns and environmental threats among others. Tensions increase. So do costs.

As the problems of education grow, there are a great many things that urgently need to be done:

- ☐ Goals in keeping with current thinking and emerging needs must be clearly set forth;
- ☐ Leadership and services at all levels of education must be improved;
- ☐ Staffs must be upgraded and the best skills available put to use at all levels;
- ☐ More attention must be given to helping students prepare for living in a society of change rather than just "teaching 'em facts";
- ☐ Changes must be carefully planned so that a shift in one segment of education doesn't adversely affect another;
- ☐ More people—students, the public at large, lawmakers and others—must become seriously involved in the planning of needed changes and their implementation.

Education is too important to be left solely to educators.

Education is a social enterprise that exists as a part of the overall fabric of society. What happens in education has an effect on society, just as what happens in society is having an effect on education.

Since education is an integral part of society and since it has become obvious that the traditional school system is often out of step with the times, modifications and adjustments must be made and the best in new ideas and technology must be brought into play to get society and education moving together again.

In evaluating the current needs of education we must bear in mind at all times the implications of such significant changes as the technological revolution, the knowledge and population explosions, and the increasing threats to the environment. Education "as usual" will not meet the demands of today and obviously will be totally inadequate for the future.

A major task of educational systems in the 1970's will be to help people develop a better understanding of the relationships between themselves and their ever changing environment, and to help young people prepare to live in a society which is virtually unknown in terms of the world of today.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION?

Everybody. But it is necessary to assign specific responsibilities to specific agencies, groups and persons if education is to function effectively. Under our system of government **the primary responsibility rests with the citizens of each state.** In most states, responsibility for the governance of education has been assigned to several agencies. The fundamental policies and standards of the educational system are prescribed by each state.

However

Even though the state has the primary legal responsibility for education, most of this responsibility has been delegated by the state to its local school districts or systems and to boards for higher or special aspects of education.

and

The federal government has an interest in the education of all its citizens and exercises some control through provisions in the Constitution, through court decisions, and through special projects and funding programs.

Implicit in the legal provisions to conduct an educational program at any level are two major concepts that should be kept in mind at all times: **equality of adequate opportunities for learners** and **equity for taxpayers** who must provide the necessary financial support.

WHO SHOULD LEAD IN BRINGING ABOUT CHANGES?

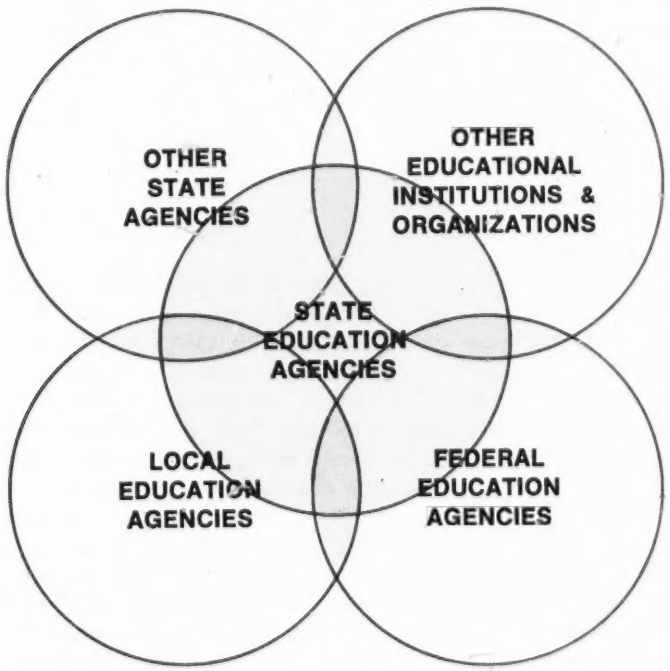
What is commonly called the **state education agency**—which usually includes a policy-making board, representing the public, a chief state school officer and his professional and supporting staff—has the major role and responsibility for the general direction at least of elementary and secondary education in every state. It is expected to provide the professional leadership and services required to establish goals and priorities, to ensure effective planning for the improvement of all aspects of education, to facilitate changes and help to implement them, and to provide for continuous evaluation of progress.

In so doing the state education agency will need to recognize that the environment of education is constantly changing and that the roles, responsibilities and functions of this agency also must change.

And all state and local education agencies will have to bear in mind that a major force that is altering the role, operation and functions of education is the sharply increased demand for **public accountability** for the educational process and its products.

Cooperation of All Related Agencies Will Be Needed

Although the state education agency has the major responsibility for leadership in planning and effecting improvements in education, it must have the active cooperation of and cooperate with all related agencies: the local school systems, other educational institutions and organizations, other state agencies, the legislature, the governor, federal education agencies and others. Since education is a social enterprise it exists neither in splendid isolation nor in conflict with other components of society. It is part of what has been aptly described as a **contingent** society—one in which every aspect is related to many other aspects. The state education agency has overlapping relationships with many other agencies as illustrated below:



In addition, there needs to be more interstate cooperation for improving education along paths already opened by Title V, Sec. 505, of the Elementary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and The Education Commission of the States.

Each State Should Take the Lead

While each state education agency should take the lead in improving education, other agencies and groups must cooperate and give their support.

Let's take a look at the role that states can and should play in developing a better system of education and making it work:

THE STATE

The state has potentially available the resources needed to solve many current educational problems. Progress can be made when the governor takes a positive and constructive leadership role, when the legislature takes appropriate actions, or when necessary constitutional amendments are approved. The "people", through their elected officials and representatives, can modify school district boundaries, reorganize districts, broaden the scope of education, remove handicapping limitations, and provide for more effective utilization of resources. In so doing, they can ensure greater equity for taxpayers and more adequate and equitable opportunities for students. Because changes require careful advance planning, the citizens, their governor and their legislature must insist that the state education agency provide the leadership and services needed to plan for all such changes.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Since a majority of the people in most states believe that local school policies should be determined by a board of education with the advice and counsel of a professional staff, the qualifications of the persons who serve on the board are of major importance. Each board member must be interested in and aware of educational needs. The local board performs a vital function as an interpreter of the needs and policies of the school system to the community. Board members, likewise, have the responsibility for reviewing studies and considering local policy alternatives which lead to needed school improvement. If a board member conceives his role as one of merely "keeping expenditures in line," he will not be working for the best interests of his district or of education. The characteristics of people who can best serve the needs of education should be identified and agreed upon. All board members should have both pre-service and in-service preparation to help them perform their board duties effectively and intelligently.

STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

A state board representing the public, with the assistance of the chief state school officer and his staff (the department of education), should establish the policies for education that are needed to supplement those prescribed by the legislature. An influential non-partisan board can assist by seeing that education does not become involved in partisan politics and is not subordinated to other activities of the state. Both the state board for elementary and secondary education and the board or boards for higher education (in states where separate boards exist) should be composed of highly competent citizens. Everyone should insist that state board members be well informed citizens who are deeply interested in education, and who can effectively analyze policy alternatives and make decisions that will be most beneficial for the education system. A state education agency should be organized and staffed to provide leadership in planning and effecting improvements in education and not be primarily concerned with enforcing regulations and controls.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS

As the chief executive officer for a district, the superintendent can either influence the local board to provide better schools or to be willing to settle for inadequate provisions and programs. He may encourage and lead the members toward pertinent and needed changes or advise stand pat, traditional policies—hence the qualifications and intent of the local administrator are important in determining whether a school district has a mediocre program or one that seeks excellence in education.

LAY CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS

While full community control of education may not be feasible or desirable under modern conditions, bona fide community involvement is essential. Such involvement should not be left to chance or to pressure groups, but should be carefully planned. An example of how the community can be beneficially involved: the board would encourage the patrons of each school to select a small group or committee to work with the principal and staff in identifying problems and planning improvements in the program, curriculum and procedures of the school. Such a committee could keep the staff and perhaps the board informed on community concerns and in turn could help the staff to keep the public fully informed about school needs, problems and changes. Members of the parent-teacher association, the school board, the chamber of commerce, service groups, labor and similar local organizations are especially interested in developing new methods to improve local schools; their know-how can and should be utilized beneficially in long-range planning activities.

THE TEACHERS

The classic role of the teacher has been to transmit knowledge or present information to students. The modern teacher, as a major member of the educational team, must do much more. With appropriate assistance, the teacher must diagnose problems and needs, design pertinent learning programs and procedures for individual students and help them appraise their learning progress. The needs of contemporary society cannot be met by subject-matter specialists who are interested only in students who progress satisfactorily in the teacher's particular discipline. In a changing environment young people must learn how to learn. Thus, the task of the teacher becomes increasingly important. Appropriate pre-service and in-service preparation and adequate incentives are essential.

THE STUDENTS

Since virtually everyone attending school will at some time in his or her lifetime become involved in electing school board members, voting on school issues and making or influencing decisions about educational policies, students should begin to acquire knowledge about their obligations and responsibilities to education and society before they leave school. They should understand the purposes of education in society, the organization necessary to provide it, and the provisions for the operation and support of education in their own community. Pertinent procedures and materials should be developed in this area as well as in other aspects of political and civic education.

Education Requires Team Work

Traditionally the primary responsibility for the governance and operation of schools has been assigned to the LOCAL LEVEL and that is probably where it should remain. Decisions relating to local needs should be made by properly organized local school systems and schools.

> **Although the local responsibility and leadership authority properly belong to local boards of education and school administrators, representatives of the community and the staff should participate in all important decisions and innovations.**

Decision making in education is becoming more complex (requiring consideration of many new facts and factors) and **requires more involvement and consent** of representatives from more groups and agencies.

Moreover:

These new factors and conditions are bringing about a redistribution of decision-making authority and responsibilities and are reshaping educational leadership. Only when appropriate decisions regarding priorities, provisions and procedures are made and implemented at the state level and equally appropriate decisions are made and implemented at the national level will it be possible for the urgently needed improvements in education to be effected in local school systems throughout the nation.

Therefore:

New responsibilities are required at the STATE LEVEL if the educational system is to work effectively under modern conditions. These new responsibilities should be concerned primarily with those areas that are essential to ensure excellence in education throughout the state.

Furthermore:

The FEDERAL LEVEL provides leadership, motivation and resources in fulfillment of its responsibilities to our total society. For example, it gives assistance in obtaining equal educational opportunities for all, improving learning and expanding employment opportunities for potential unemployables, provid-

ing aid for those seeking professional education, conducting research operations and so on.

> *The state and federal governments should seek to strengthen local responsibility for education — not weaken or displace it.*

But the state education agency must be the catalyst in seeking educational improvements and should be organized and operated to do two things:

- Provide leadership and services in planning and improving the state's educational system; and
- Assist local school systems in planning and improving their provisions for education and in measuring progress toward attaining their goals.

While the participation of federal and state agencies in the educational process is a modern-day necessity, this participation should not decrease local responsibility. If functioning properly, such participation should strengthen and increase it! If the states neglect their responsibilities for education, the federal government can and may intervene to the extent necessary in an attempt to ensure the attainment of national purposes. Similarly, if local school systems fail to meet their responsibilities, the state may have to intervene.

STATE EDUCATION AGENCY TASKS

The state education agency should assist local school systems in **six primary ways:**

GOALS Provide leadership and services to assist local districts in establishing goals. All goals, developed and accepted by educators and knowledgeable laymen, should be primarily concerned with the improvement of learning environments, opportunities and procedures for the benefit of students.

POLICIES Provide leadership in developing policies to serve as guides for future decision making and action. These must be clearly stated and fully communicated to those within the school system and to the general public.

PLANNING Provide leadership in planning needed changes in education. Planning is a systematic process of analyzing problems, identifying unmet and emerging needs and appropriate goals; considering feasible alternatives, and determining the resources and procedures necessary to see that the plans are carried out.

PRIORITIES Provide leadership in determining priorities and sequential steps in making needed changes based upon the short-, intermediate-, and long-range needs for the improvement of education.

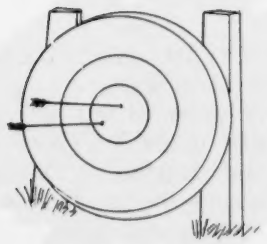
IMPLEMENTATION Provide leadership in devising specific steps, procedures and strategies for attaining all previously established goals.

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY Provide help in developing and using appropriate procedures for continuous evaluation of the programs and accomplishments of students at various levels and the effectiveness of plans, programs and procedures; prepare and disseminate informative reports on progress and problems for all agencies concerned and the general public.

LET'S TAKE A LONGER AND MORE CAREFUL LOOK AT THESE TASKS . . .

Much of the dissatisfaction with public education may not be so much the result of poor educational processes as of confusion over the goals of education!

GOALS



The first step in improving education is choosing and clearly stating appropriate goals—all else follows. Efforts to improve our schools will be ineffective if the goals are not clearly defined and spelled out. Goals must relate to specific courses of action. The goals are, of course, the major targets and they must be acceptable to the majority of the persons concerned with them: the students, their parents, the public that finances education, and the educators who are charged with seeing that they are attained.

- Many goals will be statewide in nature.
- Some goals must be designed to meet special local needs.

It should be obvious that until some reasonably firm consensus regarding what society expects from the educational system has been achieved, no systemic improvements are likely to occur. The state education agency has the major responsibility for leading in the development of statewide goals. It also has the responsibility for assisting local systems and local schools in developing their supplementary or local goals.

In establishing both goals and curricula, every effort should be made to insure broad representation of students, parents, interested citizens and professional educators and consultants. All goals for education should be directly or indirectly concerned with and designed to facilitate quality or excellence in student learning.

POLICIES

A goal and a policy are related in many ways. A goal is a fixed objective while a policy is a general guide for future decisions and actions. It indicates the course to be followed. Once policies are agreed upon they should be put in written form to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and dissension.

The state agency should provide leadership in developing three kinds of policies:

(1) Those relating to its own organization and operation.

(2) Those pertaining to the organization and operation of the state's educational program.

(3) Those pertaining to its relations with other agencies, institutions and organizations, both within and without the state.

The development of sound and workable policies requires: (a) assembling and analyzing data; (b) systematic study of the data to determine the implications of proposed policies and to identify alternative policies; and (c) the use of value judgments where evidence is inconclusive. But when value judgments are used in formulating policies a working consensus of all concerned should be sought.

PLANNING

Every trip must start with a plan if a person is to arrive at his destination.

To design education for the future requires continuous planning. The only way a state can make progress in improving education is to proceed seriously and continuously to identify the needs of society and systematically plan for change.

Educational planning is a complex process involving many interrelated activities, such as:

- Determining present problems and unmet needs of students and society.
- Identifying and stating clearly long-range goals.
- Finding alternative ways to attain the goals and selecting the best.
- Establishing priorities.
- Collecting appropriate data and obtaining resources needed to establish and implement the plans.
- Utilizing the most creative imagination and helpful technologies available.

What important areas of planning should be conducted or initiated at the state level?

FIRST: The state education agency should plan its own role, functions, services and procedures in order that it may provide **leadership** in improving education in the state.

SECOND: Educational plans should be coordinated with the planning activities conducted by other state agencies and groups. Joint planning efforts should be improved and strengthened among all educational institutions and other agencies of the state. Institutional autonomy must give way to interdependence and cooperation.

THIRD: State education agencies should develop leadership resources and provide the coordination needed to assist local schools and school districts in systematic planning. Many school systems appear not to have adequate resources for the essential tasks of planning. BUT while the state agency should provide leadership assistance and services, it should NOT do the actual planning for local districts. Developing plans for a local school district is not an appropriate function of a state education agency. There is a significant difference between the concept of providing leadership and services essential for effective planning and that of doing the actual planning.

FOURTH: Sufficient personnel and funds must be made available for planning at both the state and local levels.

FIFTH: Competent and concerned lay persons, educators, planning experts, consultants with special skills, local school boards and state boards must be actively involved in long-range planning. Expert consultants can give valuable guidance and assistance, but should not be expected to make the basic policy decisions for the representatives of the school district or the state if the goals are eventually to be accepted by a majority of those affected. Significant educational improvements occur only when the people concerned or affected are realistically involved in planning the improvements.

SIXTH: It must be recognized that some of the needed improvements in education will require changes in existing laws, special funding, adoption of new attitudes, extensive retraining and reorientation.

PRIORITIES

Because of lags and deficiencies in the past and the multiplicity of new needs, it is probably impractical or impossible for any state or district to undertake all of the needed improvements at once. The demands on staff, students and the economy would be too great. For these and other reasons, priorities or sequential steps should be established in every state. The needs should be assessed and assigned their proper places in the line.

Criteria that should be considered in establishing priorities:

Humane Concerns: The activities, programs or changes that will contribute most to the solution of both current and long-range problems of society.

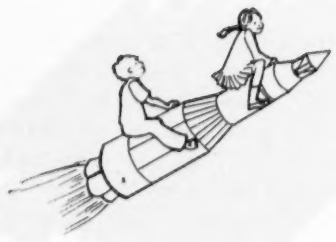
Range of Influence: The potential significance for those served, including the seriously disadvantaged.

Feasibility: The probability that what is proposed will make a significant difference.

Public Acceptance: The prospects that the change will attract favorable attention and acceptance throughout the state.

In establishing priorities, the states will want to give serious consideration to the recommendations of the National Advisory Council for State Departments of Education concerning emerging national priorities including rational planning, improvement of urban education, and development of early childhood education.

IMPLEMENTATION



The election of school boards, selection of a highly professional staff, establishment of goals, planning and all of the other things that go into the making of a good educational system are of no avail without implementation. It is what makes the mare go, what starts the automobile on its journey, blasts the rocket off into space.

One might assume that a state education agency could easily implement plans developed by its own staff, but there are often problems. Steps to implement new plans, regardless of their merit, are almost certain to generate controversy. Staff members may resist proposed changes because their accustomed roles or functions are threatened, misunderstandings and misinterpretations may arise, or the members of an implementation task force may find they cannot work together effectively. Obsolete laws, line-item budgets, lack of funds or opposition by other educators or political leaders may block implementation. Developing a detailed strategy for implementing any plan for improving education is as essential as creating the basic plans. It must be kept in mind that those who seek to implement plans may be able to help some people change their own insights, perspectives, attitudes, and perhaps their values, but they should not expect to change people.

Implementation requires several things:

(1) Widespread involvement in the process of developing plans and full communication are essential if public and staff misunderstandings and resistance are to be avoided or minimized.

(2) A basic commitment of human and economic resources is a necessity if improvement is to be accomplished.

(3) Extensive reorientation or retraining of teachers and other staff members will probably be needed.

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To determine whether the goals of education are being reached an effective evaluation process must be established.

And once established, evaluation or assessment must be a continuous process. It must determine the effectiveness of the organization and programs and provide valid measures of the progress of the students. Many of the evaluating procedures and techniques of the past have been inadequate, inappropriate or ineffective.

The state education agency can assist local school systems by:

- Evaluating state objectives, programs and progress and suggesting revisions where necessary.

- Developing, with the assistance of consultants and a representative committee, the criteria needed by local school systems to **evaluate their own organization**, procedures, programs, reporting and progress—especially the progress in student learning.

- Assisting local schools and school systems in making realistic evaluations and reports to the public.

- Encouraging and assisting institutions of higher learning to evaluate their programs for pre-service and in-service preparation of educators.

- Assisting in developing, evaluating, utilizing and interpreting measures of cost, or "resource-use," effectiveness.

The value of a soundly planned, sophisticated evaluation and accountability program operated on a continuous basis cannot be too strongly stressed. Without such a program, a state or local school system can expect crisis-generated evaluations by parents, students, legislators, and others. More often than not such evaluations are hastily contrived, superficial, without an empirical base and are, at best, of questionable value.

Evaluation and accountability are possible only when the educational goals are clearly defined. Evaluation means a determination of the worth of something or a process and it is a MUST for education for the same reason that industry MUST have quality control. Evaluation is needed to determine the educational benefits to the students; it is needed to provide better information on which decisions, including those involving the allocation of resources, can be made.

Evaluation provides the feedback that education decision makers must have before they can make judgments about the soundness of programs in operation or proposed programs. Sound evaluation techniques are essential to determine the quality of the "outputs" of the educational system.

Accountability, which should go hand in hand with evaluation, will be increasingly stressed in the decade ahead. Many groups, such as the Education Commission of the States, which chose accountability as its 1970 theme, feel strongly that the strengthening of the concept of accountability is imperative because society is demanding more of education.

To whom should education be accountable?

To: taxpayers, parents, boards of education, legislators, governors, state agencies, Congress, all interested citizens, and most importantly

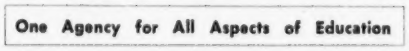
To: the students who invest a good chunk of their lives in education and should expect from this investment reasonable assurance that they will be prepared to assume responsible roles in a dynamic society.

HOW THE STATES HAVE ORGANIZED TO PROVIDE EDUCATION

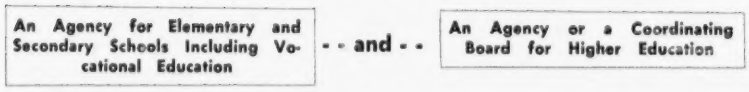
Since it has the primary responsibility for education, the state is expected to provide overall direction and guidance to its educational institutions, school districts and other systems. It does this through agencies, departments or boards which are organized in a number of different ways. Some may be virtually autonomous; in some states the board members or administrators are appointed by the governor; in others they are elected by the people. Some states have one board for all education agencies, some have separate agencies for each level or institution.

Examples of how the states have organized their various educational divisions:

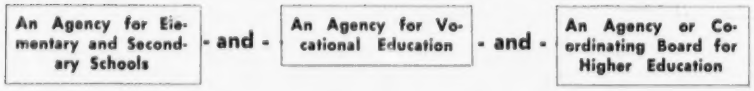
Only three states have:



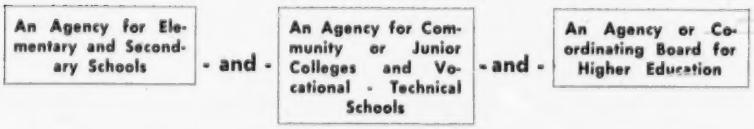
Several states have:


An Agency for Elementary and Secondary Schools Including Vocational Education
- - and - -
An Agency or a Coordinating Board for Higher Education

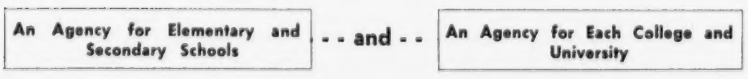
A few states have:


An Agency for Elementary and Secondary Schools
- and -
An Agency for Vocational Education
- and -
An Agency or Coordinating Board for Higher Education

Some states have:


An Agency for Elementary and Secondary Schools
- and -
An Agency for Community or Junior Colleges and Vocational - Technical Schools
- and -
An Agency or Coordinating Board for Higher Education

Still others have:



Thus there are a number of ways in which a state can organize its educational set-up. Each plan or form of organization has some potential advantages and some potential disadvantages. It is important to consider some of the organizational alternatives and weigh the probable implications or consequences of each.

CONSIDER:

One agency for all aspects of education

The New York plan, as represented by the Board of Regents, is a good example of the one-agency concept.

Some Advantages: This structure ensures maximum coordination and cooperation; maximum economy and efficiency are feasible; can present and interpret to the governor and legislature comprehensive and balanced proposals on all aspects of state education; reduces competition and power struggles within education.

Some Disadvantages: In some states the multitude of problems might be too great for one agency to handle effectively; could result in a huge bureaucracy that might discourage creativity and retard needed changes; might not give equal consideration to problems and needs of elementary and secondary education and those of more prestigious higher education.

Two agencies: One for elementary-secondary schools, one for higher education

Several states use this plan; others are considering it. Some assign the responsibility for vocational-technical education and/or junior colleges to the agency for higher education, while others—believing that 14 years of schooling will soon be as normal as completion of secondary education is at present—assign the vocational-technical schools and junior colleges to the state agency traditionally responsible for elementary-secondary education.

Some Advantages: A change to two agencies would be less drastic for many states than a change to a single agency, hence might be more acceptable; coordination and cooperation would not be as complex as under present arrangements in many states.

Some Disadvantages: The agency with most influence may get a larger proportion of available funds; the governor and

legislature would probably have to assume responsibility for coordination and might receive little help from these agencies in determining proper allocation of funds for each level.

A coordinating agency for higher education and a separate agency for elementary-secondary schools

Some Advantages: A coordinating board can encourage cooperation, support long-range planning, reduce institutional rivalries and competition; can focus attention on present and emerging needs; provide better cooperation with the elementary and secondary school agency.

Some Disadvantages: If the board does not have a firm legislative mandate and competent staff, the more influential institutions are apt to resist coordination, in which case coordination will remain in the political realm; cooperation between the two state agencies may remain on a voluntary basis, thus leaving major policy decisions to the governor and the legislature.

A separate agency for each institution of higher learning, another agency for elementary-secondary education

Appraisal: Many authorities do not think this is a good arrangement under modern conditions since it fails to consider education as an integrated social system or provide for cooperation in long-range planning for the benefit of all citizens. However, since it is a common pattern, efforts to change it are likely to be resisted in many states.

Summary

It is obvious that several organizational plans are possible. However, many states are beginning to recognize that too much independence and autonomy for educational institutions and agencies may present as many problems as too little autonomy. Unwholesome competition for power, prestige and funds for support of different kinds of educational institutions and for various levels of education is not in the best interest of a state's educational system.

STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

The state education agency primarily concerned in most states with elementary-secondary education usually includes a state board of education, a chief state school officer (called the state superintendent of public instruction or commissioner of education) and a professional and supporting staff.

The State Board of Education

The members of the state board of education are:

- Appointed by the governor in 32 states,
- Elected by the people in 12 states,
- Elected by the legislature in one state, and by local school boards in another, and
- Designated to serve on an ex officio basis in two states.

There are no state boards for elementary and secondary education in two states.

The method of selecting members who serve on the board that is responsible for all major policies relating at least to elementary and secondary education in a state may have important implications for the qualifications and perspectives of the members. **But the most promising method could result in a low quality board unless the citizens insist on the selection only of highly competent and dedicated members.**

The governor should be in a position to select especially competent people who merit the respect of the citizens. But in some states, unless there are safeguards, the governor might insist on appointing members who would support him politically and thus control the board.

Board members who are elected by the people should be able to assure popular control of education, since they represent "the will" of a majority of the voters. But many competent people might not be willing or able to engage in an expensive state-wide campaign for a position that provides little or no compensation; relatively few voters may have an opportunity to become well enough informed about candidates to be able to make a wise choice.

Apparently each of the other methods that have been proposed or used has some advantages as well as disadvantages that should be as carefully considered as those discussed above.

The Chief State School Officer

The chief state school officer is:

- Appointed by the state board of education in 26 states,
- Elected by popular vote in 20 states, and
- Appointed by the governor in four states.

The position of chief state school officer is potentially as significant as that of the president of a major institution of higher learning. The chief state school officer is responsible for providing effective and professional leadership in planning and conducting continuous studies that provide the basis and rationale for goals, policies and priorities for the improvement at least of elementary and secondary education within the state. Because of the significance of this leadership position, the method of selection should be carefully considered in the light of modern needs.

Appointment by the state board of education

A majority of the states have changed from election by popular vote or appointment by the governor to appointment by the state board during the past fifty years.

Some Advantages: A board that has the responsibility for determining and providing for the implementation of many important policies relating to education should have the opportunity to select its executive officer and, if it does so, can hold him responsible for recommending appropriate policies and implementing those approved; partisan political considerations and other extraneous factors can be reduced to a minimum.

Some Disadvantages: A weak or incompetent board may select an ineffective executive; the governor, legislature or the citizens may believe that this procedure tends to remove education to an undesirable extent from the accepted political processes in the state.

Election by popular vote

The number of states relying on this method has decreased from 31 at the beginning of the century to 20 at present.

Some Advantages: The person elected represents the "will" of a majority of the voters and is responsible to them; presumably he can have considerable influence with other popularly elected state officers.

Some Disadvantages: There is no assurance that the most "politically persuasive" person will be qualified to provide the kind of leadership and competencies required to effect the improvements needed in education under modern conditions; no educator from another state regardless of his qualifications can be considered for the position; few competent educators are likely to be willing to engage in a time and money consuming campaign for a position they believe should require primarily professional rather than political competencies.

Appointment by the governor

Although fewer states utilize this method than at the beginning of the century it has some strong advocates in every state.

Some Advantages: This procedure would enable the governor to have greater control of all aspects of state government in matters involving planning, budgeting and coordination; if the chief state school officer represents the same political party as the governor, he should be in a position to work closely with the governor and obtain his support on many important matters relating to education.

Some Disadvantages: Partisan political considerations might be injected into important decisions relating to provisions for the education of the children and youth of the state; the state board of education (presumably representing the citizens of the state) might tend to lose prestige and influence and become only a weak advisory body, or even be eliminated.

The State Department Staff

To enable the state board and chief state school officer to develop the kind of policies and provide the leadership and services needed to plan and provide for excellence in education throughout the state, it will be essential that:

- They have the assistance and cooperation of a highly competent professional and supporting staff in the department of education.
- The organizational structure for the department be flexible rather than traditional, so it can be prepared to meet changing needs.
- Provision be made from time to time for special task forces and representative advisory committees to conduct

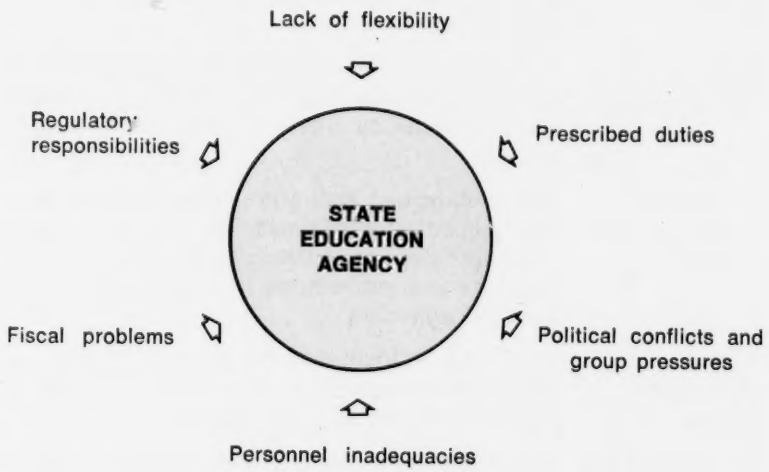
important studies and assist in developing and explaining the need for any proposed changes in major policies.

Some Constraints

Although there are possible (and debatable) advantages and disadvantages to each alternative for organizing education in a state, it has become increasingly clear that the traditional state agency needs revamping if it is to carry out its major role effectively: providing leadership and services in planning and helping others to plan for educational needs during the coming years. Its roles and functions can no longer be limited to the traditional tasks of monitoring compliance with regulations, teacher certification, accreditation, apportionment of funds, pupil transportation and safety, and various custodial functions.

In a time of rapid and ever accelerating change, the state education agency in every state is under pressure from many sides. It is subject to forces and factors that tend to shape the kind and quality of educational leadership and services that can be provided.

Some traditional constraints are illustrated below:



Some New Directions

If state education agencies do only what they have done in the past they cannot be expected to make much of a contribution to the improvement of education in ways in which it should be improved to meet the needs of a swiftly changing society—today and tomorrow!

But there are some hopeful signs. There is a growing public awareness of the significance of the state education agency's role in improving education. Recent studies show some trends—slow but nonetheless perceptible shifts in emphasis—that offer hope for new and exciting roles for state agencies. What, specifically, do the signs show?

STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES TEND TO BE MOVING —

Many operational tasks	Reduction in emphasis on operational and custodial activities; increased leadership responsibilities.
Heavy regulatory responsibilities	Less regulatory work; more time for leadership and service programs; recognition that regulatory emphasis often discourages needed educational improvements.
Routine service programs	Service activities refocused on demonstration centers and dissemination activities; assisting local systems to interpret and use research findings.
Traditional staff assignments	Reorientation of staff and employment of some specialized professionals as members of a team; greater use of consultants; improved perceptions and procedures in helping local educational agencies.
Reliance on pronouncements	More help to local districts in planning and developing appropriate policies and programs to meet the needs of their people.
An agency concerned only with state problems	Expanded relationships with education agencies in other states and the federal government.

Traditional programs	More emphasis on programs to aid the underprivileged through individual learning, preschool and other readiness programs; new leadership for pre- and in-service education of teachers, education of the gifted, racial integration, community involvement, vocational and adult education programs, etc.
Considerable reliance on subject-matter specialists	Expanded consulting services in new areas such as planning and change, centralized data processing, urban problems, regional integration, vocational education, etc.
Emphasis on minimum standards	Conducting strong evaluation programs for achievement and quality control; providing encouragement and incentive to local systems to go beyond minimal performance.
Limited information programs	Providing interpretations to the public, to legislators and to the educational community about the facts and conditions of education; greater flow of communication between levels of education.
Inadequate goals	Greater utilization of goal and mission oriented task forces; design of bold new proposals for restructuring education systems.
Severe fiscal constraints	Recognition in many areas of the larger tasks assumed by the state agency and more adequate funding to perform these duties.

Although the directions in which most state education agencies are moving are desirable, until such time as a larger percentage of the people of the state—educators as well as lay citizens—understand the importance and implications of the contributions that a properly organized and constituted state education agency could make to public and non-public education and to society, progress will be slow — too slow to keep up with rapidly emerging needs.

FACILITATION OF LEARNING

Some learning can take place anywhere and within an almost limitless range of conditions. Chimpanzees can learn to solve the problem of how to get a banana that is suspended in a zoo cage. But human beings—especially the young people in our communities—have far more complex problems and should have the most suitable locations, settings and conditions for the learning process. This means that appropriate buildings and the necessary appurtenances are needed to help provide optimum conditions for learning within the educational setting. It also means that the physical, socio-economic and intellectual-emotional environments (often largely ignored in conducting educational programs) should be favorable, that the instructional procedures should be based on the most modern knowledge and insights, and that adequate and appropriate supporting services (counseling, teaching assistants, library services, etc.) and equipment must be provided and utilized intelligently if learning opportunities are to be maximized.

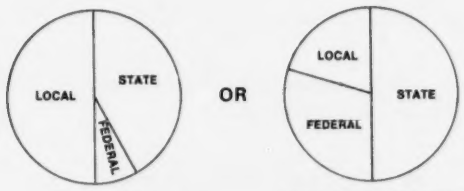
It is clear that—in addition to the school—the environment in the home, in the community, in the state and in the nation, and all social institutions exert important influences upon young people. Under-nourishment, poor health, inadequate clothing and descrimination, for example, work against the educational process. When conditions of this sort exist, educators and all citizens must be aware of them and must face up to them. Favorable learning environments are essential for a beneficial educational experience.

In other words, a central focus and concern of every state and local education agency, of every school and educational institution, and of every citizen should always be the provision of optimum learning environments, opportunities and procedures for all who need to be educated at every stage of their development.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Millions of words have been written about school support, how money should be raised, how much should be provided, and how it should be spent and accounted for. Changing needs in education alter financial circumstances as well. Practically all local revenues for school support are derived from property taxes. This practice dates back to a time when real property constituted the major source of personal income. This is no longer the case. Nationally, less than 10 percent of the income of the people is derived from property. But more than 50 percent of all revenue for support of schools still comes from property taxes. The result: serious inequities and personal burdens on taxpayers in school systems stranded on a narrow tax base, and indefensible inequalities in opportunities for students. Almost all states need to make greater effort to relate the sources of revenue for school support more closely to the sources of income. Creative new concepts of school finance must be designed.

Many authorities now believe that the federal government should supply from non-property tax sources between 25 and 30 percent of the funds needed, the states from similar sources should supply about 50 percent, and local school districts might supply between 20 and 25 percent from property taxes.



EXISTING ONE ALTERNATIVE

Some leaders are urging full funding for support of schools by the state and federal governments. Most states, however, follow a "minimum foundation program" plan whereby the state and local school districts together provide funds for a basic educational foundation in each district or unit, and the local systems are expected to provide whatever additional funds are needed to support the program at the level desired by the people in the district. Several states also provide some funds from non-property tax sources to help school districts meet their needs for adequate school facilities.

A few states have developed "incentive plans". Under this system the state provides additional funds beyond the "minimum foundation" to encourage increases in the level of local support. A new kind of incentive plan was recently adopted in Florida which does not require increases in property taxes to obtain additional support. Under this plan the state provides from non-property tax sources a substantial amount annually for each district that develops and implements a five-year plan for the improvement of instruction and learning and for annual evaluation of progress.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Regardless of these and other alternative funding processes which can and are being used, the states have the responsibility to see to it that state, local and federal funds are spent to the best advantage within each state. This can be done only when:

- ★ The financial provisions are adequate to meet changing needs.
- ★ School districts are organized to function efficiently.
- ★ Personnel are competent to conduct a modern education program.
- ★ Appropriate goals have been agreed upon.
- ★ Long-range plans have been developed with state leadership.
- ★ Adequate procedures and techniques are devised to evaluate educational progress.

IN SUMMARY

The educational system of former years is NOT adequate for the present or future. Many new and demanding needs are not being met and won't be met until needed changes are made. NOW is the time to reconsider many long-accepted traditions relating to the responsibilities for education in every state. In the 50 states the citizens and their public officials must join with educators at all levels in:

- ★ Bringing their state education agency up-to-date and insisting that it assume a more dynamic leadership role in the state.

- ★ Improving their boards of education at both the state and local levels.

- ★ Employing and involving the most qualified persons available in the operations of their educational systems, coupled with continuous in-service training opportunities.

- ★ Insisting upon establishing appropriate educational policies, goals, priorities, planning, implementation, research programs, and procedures for evaluation and accountability.

- ★ Recognizing that in modern society it is neither possible nor desirable to establish and maintain clear cut lines between politics and education. Sound political involvement is both necessary and desirable if the goals and purposes of education are to be achieved.

- ★ Providing optimum learning environments, opportunities and procedures for all who need to be educated at every state of their development.

- ★ Committing whatever resources are necessary to develop and maintain a modern educational system as an investment in the national welfare.

and

- ★ Subscribing to the concept that persistent educational problems and dilemmas will not be resolved without adopting bold new plans and methods for the organization, operation and financing of the educational program. (It is much easier for school systems to continue to make minor modifications in existing programs than to make the fundamental improvements that are essential to meet the rapidly changing needs of society.)

These are new and challenging directions to better education in America. The journey down this road is neither easy nor short. But the reward—an improved educational system for all—is well worth every effort.

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improving state leadership in education